SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES	SECULAR INSTITUTES	SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE
1. Definition	1. Definition	1. Definition
A religious institute is a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows, either perpetual or temporary which are to be renewed, however, when the period of time has elapsed, and lead a life of brothers or sisters in common. (canon 607 §2)	A secular institute is an institute of consecrated life in which the Christian faithful, living in the world, strive for the perfection of charity and seek to contribute to the sanctification of the world, especially from within. (canon 710)	§1. Societies of apostolic life resemble institutes of consecrated life; their members, without religious vows, pursue the apostolic purpose proper to the society and, leading a life in common as brothers or sisters according to their proper manner of life, strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions. §2. Among these are societies in which members assume the evangelical counsels by some bond defined in the constitutions. (canon 731)
2. Proper Law	2. Proper Law	2. Proper Law
Constitutions and other norms. (canon 587)	Constitutions and other norms. (canon 587)	Constitutions and other norms. (canons 587. 732)
3. Commitment	3. Commitment	3. Commitment
Profess the three evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity, obedience. (canons 599-601)	Profess the three evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity, obedience. (canons 599-601)	a. All members embrace celibacy. (canons 277, 739) b. In some: members embrace the evangelical counsels. (canon 731 §2) c. Personal Property (canon 741 §2)
4. Bond	4. Bond	4. Bond
Public Vows (canons 607 §2, 1192 §§1-2)	Determined in the constitutions: private vows, oath, promise, other. (canon 712, 1192, 1199-1201)	Determined in the constitutions: private vows, oath, promise, other. (canons 731, 735, 1192, 1199-120l)
5. Community Living	5. Community Living	5. Community Living
Fraternal life in common. (canons 602, 665, 668 §3, 670)	Fraternal life but not normally in common. (canons 602, 714)	Fraternal life in common. (canons 731, 740, 741 §2)
6. Witness	6. Witness	6. Witness
Public witness to Christ and the Church and a certain separation from the world. (canon 607 §3)	Living in the world like a leaven endeavoring to permeate everything with an evangelical spirit. (canons 710, 713)	Pursue the apostolic purpose proper to each institute. (canon 731 §1)

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7. Apostolate	7. Apostolate	7. Apostolate
Corporate apostolate in the name of the Church and of the institute. (canons 673-675, 677, 678, 680-682)	Ordinarily members are engaged in their own professions or avocations in the world. (canon 713)	Corporate apostolate proper to each one. (canon 731)
8. Status	8. Status	8. Status
Clerics are incardinated in the institute. (canon 266 §2)	a. Lay members retain their own status. b. Clerics normally incardinated in the diocese. (canons 266 §3, 711, 713 §3, 715 §1)	Clerics are incardinated into the society unless constitutions say otherwise. (canons 266 §2, 736, §1)
9. Admission	9. Admission	9. Admission
a. Celibate b. 17 years complete c. First Profession: at least 18 d. Final Profession: at least 21 (canon 643, 656, 658)	a. Celibate b. Majority age c. First Commitment after 2 years d. Final Commitment after 5 years (canons 97, 721-723)	a. Celibate b. 17 years complete c. First and Final Commitment: determined in proper law. (canons 735 §2 with conditions also established for institutes)
10. Ordination	10. Ordination	10. Ordination
Studies universal and proper law (canon 659 §3) Pontifical clerical institute: major superior issues dimissorial letters. (canon 1019)	Same as diocesan clergy (canon 1019 §2)	Studies same as diocesan clergy (canon 736 §2) Pontifical clerical society: major superior issues dimissorial letters. (canon 1019)
11. Government	11. Government	11. Government
Superiors have religious authority according to universal law and constitutions (canon 596 §1) In clerical religious institutes: power of governance (canons 134, 596 §2)	Superiors have authority according to universal law and constitutions (canon 596 §§1 and 3)	Superiors have authority according to universal law and constitutions (canon 732, 596 §§1 and 3) Clerical societies: power of governance. (canons 134, 596 §2, 732)

This chart was designed by Fr. Michael O'Reilly, OMI (RIP) for a course on Consecrated Life at St. Paul University, Ottawa in 1995. With approval from Fr. O'Reilly, Eileen Jaramillo, DMin, JCL made changes and keeps it updated. All rights reserved.